



More than 18,000 safety belt citations issued during Click It or Ticket

Law enforcement officers in Michigan issued more than 18,000 safety belt citations during the recent *Buckle Up or Pay Up, Click It or Ticket* enforcement period, according to preliminary reports from participating agencies.

Between May 21 and June 3, officers across the state cited motorists who were not properly buckled in safety belt enforcement zones. Of the 18,436 restraint citations issued, 777 were for children under 4 years old who were not properly restrained in a child safety seat.

Officers wrote 13,176 of these citations in grant-funded safety belt enforcement zones. The Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP) administered federal traffic safety funds to agencies in 55 counties for the enforcement activity.



A May 21 media event in Lansing kicked off Click It or Ticket enforcement in Mid-Michigan.

Law enforcement agencies that voluntarily agreed to make safety belt enforcement a priority during the enforcement period issued the remainder of the citations. The Michigan State Police Traffic Safety Division focused additional enforcement on commercial truck drivers.

In addition to writing safety belt citations, law enforcement officers arrested 870 motorists for drunk driving and other alcohol-related charges, including one case of child endangerment when a drunk driver had a 5-year-old passenger in the vehicle. They also made 337 felony

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Statewide drunk driving crackdown starts August 15

Law enforcement officers across the state will crack down on impaired drivers during the *Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest.* drunk driving campaign August 15 – September 3.

Hundreds of additional officers will be on the road looking specifically for drunk drivers, pulling them over, and arresting those drivers who are at or above a .08 blood alcohol content. From city streets to rural highways, the crackdown will blanket the state as part of the increased effort to prevent and reduce drunk driving fatalities.

The Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP) is providing federal traffic safety funding to fifty-five counties to conduct overtime patrols during the two-

week crackdown, which includes the Labor Day holiday period.

In 2006, alcohol and/or drug-related traffic deaths rose from 408 in 2005 to 440, a jump of almost 8 percent. That represents just over 40 percent of all traffic deaths. Michigan has not experienced an alcohol/drug involved percentage in traffic deaths that high in more than ten years.

Some of the increase can be attributed to a rise in drug-impaired involvement in crashes, which rose 16 percent in 2006.



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Traffic deaths decline slightly on America's highways

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Mary E. Peters recently announced that traffic deaths on U.S. roads were down slightly in 2006 according to preliminary figures, but cautioned that far too many lives continue to be lost.

While the number of road deaths is projected to have declined slightly nationwide from 43,443 in 2005 to 43,300 in 2006, "even one death is too many," Secre-

tary Peters said. And over half of passenger vehicle occupants killed died unbuckled, the preliminary data shows.

The preliminary figures also show that between 2005 and 2006: overall alcohol-related fatalities increased 2.4 percent from 17,525 to 17,941; pedestrian deaths dropped slightly, from 4,881 to 4,768; and fatalities from large truck crashes dropped from 5,212 to 5,018, a 3.7 percent decline.

OHSP communications manager honored with public relations award



Anne Readett, communications manager for the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning (OHSP), was recently named the PACE Maker of the Year by the Central Michigan Chapter

of the Public Relations Society of America.

This is a top honor presented to an individual whose career accomplishments have added significantly to the advancement of public relations and demonstrated professional contributions in public service, mentoring and adhering to the highest ethical standards established by the national society. Nominations are reviewed by previous PACE Maker award recipients.

Under Readett's leadership, OHSP, a division of the MSP, has produced numerous behavior-changing and award-winning public information campaigns.

Since 1997, safety belt use in Michigan has increased from around 70 percent to

a record high of 94.3 percent, the second highest safety belt use rate in the nation. As a result, Michigan has recorded the lowest number of traffic fatalities and injuries seen since World War II. OHSP's efforts to enhance the visibility of safety belt enforcement efforts through statewide communications campaigns, which Readett oversees, are instrumental components to this success.

In addition to her work at OHSP, Readett is requested regularly by professors to share her first-hand knowledge of public relations and social marketing with future generations of communications professionals at Michigan State University's School of Journalism. She also volunteers her time with her community as a trustee on the Okemos Education Foundation and serves as the Merit Badge Coordinator for Boy Scout Troop #125, Chief Okemos Council.

Before joining the MSP, as a communications representative for OHSP in 1995, Readett worked for the Senate Majority Communications Office for six years.

In 1996 she obtained her APR, Accredited in Public Relations, designation by the Public Relations Society of America.

A first look at 2006 crash data is available on the Web

A first look at 2006 crash data is available on the Michigan Traffic Crash Facts website. The 2006 information will be released throughout the summer.

The rollout begins with crash facts broken down by county and city/community, including deer- and alcohol-related crash information. Look for more statewide information to be released later this summer.

Visit www.michigantrafficcrashfacts.org and click on "The 2006 Rolling Release of MTCF" for more information.

CITATIONS

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and 1,849 misdemeanor arrests, issued 6,948 speeding citations and found 1,085 drivers with suspended licenses.

Law enforcement agencies in 11 counties participated in a pilot project by conducting roving safety belt patrols the night of May 24. That evening, officers issued 262 safety belt and seven child restraint citations. They also found nine drunk drivers, 37 drivers with suspended licenses and 28 speeders.

Michigan's current safety belt use rate is 94.3 percent. New figures for 2007 and complete citation results from this May's enforcement campaign will be available in mid-July.

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States struggle with roadside memorial issue

The issue of roadside memorials and how states should regulate them continues to garner attention from safety advocates, legislatures, and the media. According to Professor Arthur Jipson, a University of Dayton scholar who tracks state action on roadside memorials, twenty-two states now have enacted legislation to address this issue in some capacity. That number has doubled in the last five years.

According to Jipson and other experts, roadside memorials have become so numerous and so distracting and dangerous that more and more states are trying to regulate them. California and Montana allow the memorials but only if alcohol was a factor in the crash. Other states like Wisconsin and New Jersey limit how long memorials can remain in place.

Delaware is taking a unique approach that may be duplicated in other states. The state is establishing a memorial park near a highway exit in hopes of discouraging the memorials. The park will include a reflection pool and red bricks with crash victims' names inscribed, which are provided free to the loved ones.

Michigan has no official policy regarding roadside memorials, according to Mark Bott of the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). However, if a roadside memorial in the right-of-way is deemed a safety hazard because it is a driver distraction or is an object that could cause injury if struck, then MDOT will remove it.

States have felt the need to regulate memorials but face a difficult balanc-

ing act. Professor Jipson was quoted in a recent New York Times article as saying "Governments are reluctant to tell people what to feel or how to mourn. At the same time, it's their job to keep these spaces public."

In addition to balancing the concerns of family members with public safety, states have to be cognizant of concerns raised by atheists and others who object to religious images being placed in public space. The Freedom from Religion Foundation has successfully defended citizens who have been arrested for removing religious images from roadside memorials. The Foundation also has filed litigation against states where the group believes the state is encouraging the religious overtones in the memorials.

Road Rage Awareness Week is July 15-21

In an effort to raise awareness about road rage and educate motorists about the dangers of road rage behavior, July 15-21, 2007, has been designated as Road Rage Awareness Week in Michigan.

The effort is being spearheaded by Reaching Out Against Road Rage (R.O.A.R.R.), an organization begun by Kay Shabazz of Muskegon Heights. Shabazz organized R.O.A.R.R. following the 2002 death of her daughter, Diya Foster, in a road rage-induced traffic crash on I-96 near Coopersville.

Shabazz's mission in creating this organization is to improve traffic safety by recognizing that road rage is a problem that occurs on roadways daily and then getting communities to work together to prevent road rage incidents. In addition to education about the issue, R.O.A.R.R. provides advocate support and assistance to victims of road rage and their families.

Road Rage Awareness Week includes a candlelight vigil, silent auction, and driver's education forum. For more information, visit www.roarrinc.org.



What's Ahead

JULY

- 15-21 **Road Rage Awareness Week**
www.roarrinc.org
- 18 **Ride Your Motorcycle to Work Day**
www.ridetowork.org

AUGUST

- 5-11 **National Stop on Red Week**
http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/intersections/srlr_week.htm
- 17-9/3 **Drunk Driving. Over the Limit. Under Arrest crackdown**
www.michigan.gov/ohsp

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Register for September 20 drowsy driving symposium

Registration forms for the Wake Up Michigan! Symposium on Thursday, September 20, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., at the Steelcase University Learning Center, Town Hall, in Grand Rapids will soon be available online at www.michigan.gov/ohsp.

The conference will focus on the importance of sleep, drowsy driving dangers, at-risk groups, countermeasures and emerging technologies, the legal and legislative impact of drowsy driving, fatigue from an officer's point of view, and employer risks and return on investment.

The symposium is targeted toward employers, law enforcement, engineers, and commercial motor vehicle fleets.

Speakers include Dr. Christopher L. Drake of the Henry Ford Sleep Center, Darrel Droblich of the National Sleep Foundation, Dr. Mark R. Rosekind of the Alterness Solutions/National Sleep Foundation, and Bryan Vila, author of *Tired Cops: The Importance of Managing Fatigue*.

The cost is \$50. For more information, contact Dan Vartanian at the Office of Highway Safety Planning at (517) 333-5322 or vartanid@michigan.gov.

THE PAAM CORNER

Recent rulings support law enforcement actions

There was a recent United States Supreme Court opinion supporting law enforcement. In the case, the suspect was clocked at 73 mph in a 55 mph zone. When the police activated their overhead lights, the defendant took off at a high rate of speed. The ten mile long chase involved speeds over 85 mph on a two-lane road at night, the running of red lights, and the forcing of several cars off the road. When there was no surrounding traffic, an officer pushed the suspect's car from behind, forcing him off the road. The suspect became a quadriplegic from the resulting crash. He sued the pursuing officers.

The United States Supreme Court held that the officer's actions in bumping the suspect off the road were reasonable, and therefore did not constitute an unreasonable seizure in violation of the Fourth Amendment. In response to the suspect's claim that the police should have ended the chase rather than force him off the road, they stated:

"We are loath to lay down a rule requiring the police to allow fleeing suspects to get away whenever they drive so recklessly that they put other people's lives in danger...The Constitution assuredly does not impose this invitation to impunity-earned-by-recklessness. Instead we lay down a more sensible rule: A police officer's attempt to terminate a dangerous high-speed car chase that threatens the lives of innocent bystanders does not violate

the Fourth Amendment, even when it places the fleeing motorist at risk of serious injury or death."

Scott v Harris, Case no. 05-1631, released on April 30, 2007.

It is expected that in the near future, there will be a new set of administrative rules for the breath testing program. A public hearing was recently held regarding the amendments. Yes, the rules were just amended at the beginning of the year, but additional changes are coming – ones that should make it easier to calibrate the preliminary breath test instruments. More information on this topic will follow in future articles.

For further information on these changes and PAAM training programs contact David Wallace, Traffic Safety Training Attorney at 517-334-6060 or email at wallaced@michigan.gov. Consult your prosecutor before adopting practices suggested by reports in this article.



SAFETY Network

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